



# Blade Runner

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The below content warning is meant to warn you of potentially sensitive or triggering topics that are present in the formal content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of committee (e.g., debate, crisis updates, directives), so that you can either prepare yourself before reading this background guide or opt-out of reading it entirely

Please be advised that the film Blade Runner: Final Cut is rated 14A for graphic violence.

Content warnings for the film:

Violence  
Death/dying  
Blood

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Throughout the conference, please note that delegates shall only:

1. Wear Western Business Attire (i.e., no costumes, no casual wear)
2. Embody their assigned country's/character's position, not their mannerisms (e.g., no accents, no props)
3. Opt for diplomatic, respectful, and tactful speech and phrasing of ideas, including notes (e.g., no foul language, suggestive remarks, or obscene body language)
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UTMUN 2021's Secretariat and Staff are committed to ensuring every attendee has an enjoyable, comfortable, and safe experience and is able to participate fully and positively at our conference.

If you have any equity concerns (e.g., concerns about barriers to participation) or accessibility needs now or during the conference, please do not hesitate to contact your committees' dais and/or our Director of Academics at [academics@utmun.org](mailto:academics@utmun.org).

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Dear Delegates,

Hello and welcome to UTMUN 2021! My name is Asha Mior, and I am the committee director for Blade Runner.

A little bit about me: I am a first-year life science student at the University of Toronto, planning to major in global health. I'm originally from Vancouver, BC, where I'm currently living because of the pandemic. In high school, I was an active participant in public speaking, debate, and Model UN. Over the years, I took part in all types of committees — but crisis committees have always held a special place in my heart. The rapid pace, the twists and surprises, and the lively atmosphere truly set crisis committees apart as a unique MUN experience.

While designing the Blade Runner committee, I worked hard to incorporate all of these elements to create the most immersive and thrilling experience possible. Rest assured: there will be action, drama, and mystery! Before the conference, be sure to familiarize yourself with the specific mechanics of this committee, and I cannot emphasize enough the importance of watching the original film, Blade Runner: Final Cut. Even though the committee goes beyond the scope and timeline of the movie, it will provide necessary details about the committee history and setting that may not be explicitly covered in this background guide.

While crisis committees are generally recommended for more experienced delegates, I would like to point out that novice delegates are absolutely welcome to apply for Blade Runner as well! Many of the characters in this committee are designed to be beginner-friendly; particularly the characters of Jay Newtown and Akira Kawano, who were specifically designed to work together as a team. Additionally, each of the characters has a very specific role in the committee, so make sure you read through their descriptions and fully understand how each one will fit in to the bigger picture.

Lastly, I'd like to comment on the online format of the conference. I know that this will be completely different from the Model UN conferences that you may have participated in pre-COVID, but that doesn't mean that it won't be as fun! I can assure you, our team is working hard to make sure that this committee is just as engaging as it would be in person.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you in February!

Sincerely,

Asha Mior,

Blade Runner Director  
asha.mior@mail.utoronto.ca

## Overview of Blade Runner: Final Cut

When *Blade Runner* was released in 1982, it was groundbreaking. Loosely based on the book “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep” by Philip K. Dick, the movie was a dystopian hit with a classic film noir feel. Since the film’s original release, there have been two subsequent versions of *Blade Runner* — this committee is specifically based on *Blade Runner: Final Cut*, released in 2007 to best represent director Ridley Scott’s original vision for the movie.

*Blade Runner: Final Cut* takes place in Los Angeles in November of 2019. In the film, L.A. has become extremely populated and urbanized, and the environment has been absolutely decimated. As a result, many citizens elect to live in so-called “Off-World colonies,” which are considered to be “a chance to begin again in a golden land of opportunity and adventure.” At this time, artificial intelligence technology has advanced so far that it is now capable of mimicking life. In particular, the powerful and mysterious Tyrell Corporation engineers humanoid robots known as Replicants, which are used as slave labour for exploring and colonizing other worlds. By 2019, the latest Replicants have reached the Nexus-6 phase. Nexus-6 Replicants are virtually identical to humans in appearance, superior in strength and agility, and at least equal in intelligence. However, they only have a maximum lifespan of four years.

Following the violent mutiny of a Nexus-6 combat team in an off-world colony, Replicants have been declared illegal for use on Earth under penalty of death. To enforce this, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has special police squads called Blade Runners, which catch and kill rogue Replicants — a process known euphemistically as “retirement”.

At the start of *Blade Runner: Final Cut*, it is explained that four Nexus-6 Replicants have illegally made it to Earth, and they are currently in hiding in Los Angeles. These Replicants are Leon, Zhora, Pris, and Roy Batty (the group’s leader). LAPD captain Harry Bryant calls upon Rick Deckard, an accomplished Blade Runner, to catch and “retire” the four Replicants.

Deckard’s main love interest in the film is Rachael, a Replicant who works for the Tyrell Corporation. Until Deckard conducts a Voight-Kampff test, Rachael is not aware that she is a Replicant, since she has been implanted with the childhood memories of Eldon Tyrell’s niece, Lilith.

Meanwhile, Roy Batty and Pris head to the Tyrell Corporation, where they manipulate a genetic designer named J.F. Sebastian to allow them to meet Eldon Tyrell himself, CEO of the Tyrell Corporation. Roy reveals to Tyrell that he is reaching the end of his four-year lifespan, and begs him for extra life. When Tyrell refuses, Roy kills him as well as Sebastian.

After many long and violent battles, Deckard manages to catch and kill Leon, Zhora, and Pris. However, during his final stand-off against Roy Batty, Roy saves him from falling off the roof in a final act of mercy. Finally, after delivering the critically acclaimed “Tears in Rain” monologue, Roy’s lifespan comes to an end and he dies.

### Committee Setting

The UTMUN Blade Runner Committee takes place in the present day, February 2021. Approximately 14 months have passed since the events of *Blade Runner: Final Cut*. Following these events, a committee has been assembled with the goal of re-evaluating the use of Replicants, and above all, avoiding future Replicant mutinies.

This committee consists of members from various interest groups, including Blade Runners, representatives of the Tyrell Corporation, local business owners, and media representatives. Some of these characters were present in *Blade Runner: Final Cut*, while others are new.

The mandate of this committee is:

- To discuss the complex underlying ethical issues that led to the events of November 2019
- To discuss alternative methods of global colonization
- To determine the future of Replicants
- To react and respond to future crises related to the Replicant population

Over the course of the conference, this committee will pass numerous directives to re-imagine the role of artificial intelligence in society, to defend the citizens of Los Angeles, and to restore Earth and the Off-World Colonies to their former glory.

## Key Issues

### 1. Ethics of using Replicants

The use of Replicants in the Blade Runner world creates a complex moral debate about the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence to advance human society. In the aftermath of November 2019, the citizens of Los Angeles have become polarized and formed various interest groups based on their own stances on the Replicant issue. Now, the committee must navigate these diverse ethical viewpoints to decide which path to take into the future.

Within the context of Blade Runner, some of the main ethical stances include:

1. It's fundamentally wrong to use Replicants as slaves for global colonization. At the Nexus-6 stage, they are essentially human, with thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Citizens who subscribe to this ethical viewpoint believe that existing Replicants should be integrated into human society and treated like humans. New methods of off-world colonization will need to be developed in lieu of Replicants, or off-world colonization will need to halt because it is fundamentally unjust to send androids to work as slaves to do manual labor in hazardous conditions when technology has advanced this far.
2. Replicants are just machines. It is better to send androids into unknown and possibly unsafe environments in space than risking the lives of humans. Replicant production should continue, and steps should be taken to reduce the threat they pose to the human population.
3. Regardless of the broader ethical ramifications of Replicants, they have become a danger to the human population and must be eradicated by any means possible. Blade Runners should be given maximum power and the entire Replicant population should be eliminated no matter the cost to development of off-world colonies.

In fact, citizens have become so polarized on the ethics of Replicants that some have formed extreme political factions based on their beliefs. These groups have frequently been at odds over the last year, and the threat of violence and anarchy is not far-fetched. In particular, some of the anti-Replicant factions have begun fearmongering and radicalizing citizens. In addition to forming their own opinions on the ethical ramifications of Replicant use, delegates will also have to calm the growing polarization within Los Angeles. Media representatives in particular should be conscious of the role that their news media may play in either calming or angering these groups, and the broader implications that their actions may have on the city.

### 2. Preventing a future Replicant mutiny

Since November 2019, everyone in Los Angeles has been terrified of the prospect of another Replicant mutiny — and understandably so. With this in mind, one of the most important roles of this committee will be to prevent the formation of a new rebel Replicant militia, and to prepare for the eventuality of another Replicant mutiny. Since Replicants have already escaped to Earth at least twice in the past, there is a strong possibility that this could happen again. Blade Runners must be ready to take the lead in responding to any new crises, a role that would require bold actions and sometimes risks. The two media representatives will also need to plan their approaches to informing the citizens of Los Angeles and the off-World colonies without inciting panic.

### 3. The future of global colonization

If the Blade Runner world is entering a post-Replicant reality, what will happen to the future of off-world colonization? How will this affect the citizens living on off-World colonies, and the many citizens of Earth who are hoping to flee imminent environmental devastation? And how will the Tyrell corporation stay relevant in this



new landscape? Depending on how the committee progresses, delegates will have to address these questions and more. Delegates are encouraged to brainstorm innovative solutions to the issue of global colonization, and particularly consider the role of their characters in the years to come.



# Committee Mechanics

## Voight-Kampff Tests

Delegates can have a Voight-Kampff Test conducted on any character in the committee by passing a public directive. This applies both to delegates, as well as other characters from the Blade Runner world that the committee may interact with over the course of the conference.

## Retirement

Delegates can have any character in the committee (or known to the committee) retired by motioning to retire if, and only if:

- The individual fails a Voight-Kampff test
- Two-thirds of the committee votes yes
- No Blade Runners veto the motion

## News Articles

Both Amanda McCoy (L.A. Times) and R.J. Henderson (ICMC) have the ability to publish news articles by passing a public OR private directive. Note, however: while news articles can be submitted privately by these delegates, the committee will most likely find out about the article if its contents result in significant consequences in the committee (for example, if an article incites a riot).

## Media Releases

Sora Imai, Public Relations Director at the Tyrell Corporation, can produce media releases by passing a public directive. These media releases will be available to different groups of citizens depending on which news outlet decides to publish the release. The media release will only be published if:

- Lilith Tyrell and Sora Imai both vote in favour of the proposed public directive;
- Amanda McCoy (L.A. Times), R.J. Henderson (ICMC), or both sponsor the resolution. Sponsoring the resolution constitutes a formal agreement to publish the release in their news media.

## Characters

The Blade Runner committee consists of 16 delegates. Committee members will fall into the following categories:

- Blade Runners (5)
- Tyrell Corporation (5)
- Business owners (4)
- Media (2)

Characters will also come into the committee with their own notions about Replicants and how to handle this crisis. As such, delegates could potentially form “Pro-Replicant” and “Anti-Replicant” blocs depending on how the committee progresses. All necessary information regarding each character’s stance is outlined below.

Characters indicated with an asterisk (\*) were characters in *Blade Runner: Final Cut*, while those that are not marked are original characters for the committee. Please note that characters from the movie will NOT have an advantage over original characters — all characters in this committee are of equal importance, and all of the necessary information about these characters has all been provided below. Also, all delegates are strongly encouraged to develop their characters through speeches and private directives over the course of the conference.

### Blade Runners

#### Harry Bryant\*

Bryant is the captain of the LAPD, and all other Blade Runners report to him. He has been known for his extreme hatred of Replicants, as he believes they are irredeemably evil and dangerous to the citizens of Los Angeles. Overall, Bryant will stop at nothing to eradicate the entire Replicant population.

#### Dave Holden\*

Holden is the Blade Runner assigned to test new employees at the Tyrell Corporation to ensure that they are not Replicants. As such, he is the only Blade Runner who is remotely tolerated by Lilith Tyrell.

In November 2019, Holden was shot by a rebel Replicant named Leon. He survived the attack, although he was severely injured and was hospitalized for nearly all of 2020. For all intents and purposes, Holden is essentially recovered by the time this committee meets in February 2021. Because of his own traumatic experiences, Holden is strongly anti-Replicant.

#### Luke Ackerman

Ackerman is a Blade Runner that typically works in the region of L.A. known as Animoid Row. Due to his work in this area, he knows Abdul Ben Hassan well, and is generally trusted by the other vendors in the area. Unlike most Blade Runners, Ackerman advocates for a more humane alternative to retiring Replicants — as a result, Bryant does not like or trust him.

#### Cora Maddox

Maddox is well-known and respected for her longtime loyalty to the LAPD. Out of all the Blade Runners on the committee, she is Bryant’s favourite. A model Blade Runner, she has retired many Replicants over the

years, although she has generally preferred to stay neutral on the politics and ethics of Replicant use in the past.

### **Ronnie Portis**

Portis is the newest Blade Runner on the committee — she only joined the LAPD after the events of November 2019. She represents a new generation of young Blade Runners: zealous and very anti-Replicant. Since Portis is so new to the LAPD, she does not have much official power, but she has a knack for manipulating Bryant.

## **Tyrell Corporation**

### **CEO: Lilith Tyrell\***

Lilith Tyrell is the CEO of the Tyrell Corporation, and all other Tyrell employees and representatives report to her. She is the niece of Eldon Tyrell, inheriting the corporation after his death in November 2019. In the original movie, she is the source of embedded memories for Rachael, a Replicant who works at the Tyrell Corporation. Like her uncle, Lilith will stop at nothing to ensure that the Replicant industry continues to grow.

### **Genetic Designers: Jay Newtown and Akira Kawano**

Jay and Akira design Replicants for the Tyrell Corporation. Their department focuses on designing Nexus-8s, the next generation of Replicants. Although they are formally considered to be lower-level employees, the Genetic Designers actually hold a significant amount of innate power within the company. After all, the Tyrell Corporation could not function without people to design and engineer the Replicants. Generally, the Genetic Designers will be in favour of anything Lilith Tyrell proposes — but they may be able to use their influence to coerce her into changing her mind if necessary. Note: Jay and Akira are two separate roles, but they should work closely together over the course of the conference.

### **Marketing Director: Claudia Finch**

As the Marketing Director for the Tyrell Corporation, Claudia works with other businesses and off-World colonies to expand the reach of the Tyrell Corporation and increase their profits. She is the main liaison between the Tyrell Corporation and the four business owners in the committee.

### **Public Relations Director: Sora Imai**

As Public Relations Director, Sora handles the public image of the Tyrell Corporation. Following the events of November 2019, the public has lost confidence in the Tyrell Corporation, so she must work to restore their trust. Sora's most important job is to produce press releases with the help of the other Tyrell representatives. She must also work closely with the representatives from the L.A. Times and ICMC to have her press releases published (see Media Releases).

## **Business owners**

### **Taffey Lewis\***

Taffey Lewis owns The Snake Pit, a local bar that has been known to employ several Replicants. In fact, in November 2019, one of the six rebel Replicants was found to be a dancer at The Snake Pit. Taffey's primary motivation is money, and he will do anything to turn a profit. He is a strong supporter of the Tyrell Corporation and vehemently dislikes Blade Runners.

**Abdul Ben Hassan \***

Abdul Ben Hassan works as an artificial Animal Designer on Animoid Row, where he is renowned for his work designing animoid snakes (See Other Important Factors To Consider). One of his main sources of revenue is designing snakes for The Snake Pit. Abdul does not deal with Replicants directly, but he tends to be pro-Replicant because he is part of the genetic designing industry himself. That being said, he is generally a cooperative individual with the largely anti-replicant LAPD, and in November 2019, Abdul used his technical expertise to aid Rick Deckard (a Blade Runner) in catching three rogue Replicants. One of Abdul's particularly useful skills is the ability to identify who manufactured and purchased Animoids based on their barcodes.

**Howie Lee \***

Howie Lee owns a Japanese restaurant called The White Dragon in Los Angeles. He is seen at the beginning of Blade Runner: Final Cut, when Rick Deckard comes to order dinner from his restaurant. Howie's restaurant is frequented by Blade Runners, so he is often privy to otherwise private information about the inner workings of the LAPD and his other customers. In addition to speaking English and Japanese, he is also fluent in Cityspeak, which is a useful asset when dealing with ordinary citizens of Los Angeles. Howie's personal opinions on the ethics of Replicants are currently unknown.

**Maya McCarthy**

Maya McCarthy owns an old curio shop called The Fires of Orc. She is the oldest member of this committee, and one of the few living people who still remembers a world without Replicants and environmental devastation. As a result, she is strongly anti-Replicant and against off-world colonization. Maya also brings some unique knowledge to the committee — her shop is a treasure trove of information about the early days of the Tyrell Corporation and the Blade Runner era.

**Media****L.A. Times Editor-In-Chief: Amanda McCoy**

The L.A. Times is the primary news source for Los Angeles, and as such, has a huge influence on the citizens of L.A. It's worth noting that articles in the L.A. Times are written in Cityspeak, meaning that they are highly accessible to ordinary people in lower-income communities on Earth. With these factors in mind, the Editor-in-Chief must make prudent choices about the content she produces, as the wrong decision could have devastating impacts on Los Angeles and the world at large. Leading up to the committee session, the L.A. Times does not have a predetermined stance on Replicants.

**Inter-Colony Media Conglomerate Editor-In-Chief: R.J. Henderson**

The Inter-Colony Media Conglomerate (typically shortened to ICMC, pronounced "ick-mick") handles all news media for the off-World colonies. ICMC has a distinct bias towards off-world colonization, and frequently advertises the off-World colonies as a "chance to begin again in a golden land of opportunity and adventure." Because of this, the Editor-In-Chief is most likely to align with the Tyrell Corporation on many issues, as both of their corporations significantly benefit from the increased use of Replicants.

## Other Important Factors To Consider

- Some Replicants are not aware that they are Replicants. This happens because they have been created with “embedded memories” from before their actual life began. These memories improve the sophistication of a Replicant’s emotional intelligence, making them harder to identify. The only way to determine whether an individual is actually a human is through a Voight-Kampff test, though this is becoming increasingly difficult with the more advanced replicants. **Keep in mind: any member of this committee could actually be a Replicant, even without their knowledge.**
- All Nexus-6 Replicants have a lifespan of four years. In the past, a process known as EMS Recombination was used in an attempt to prolong this lifespan. However, this only succeeded in creating a deadly virus that killed the host Replicant. No other process for altering a Replicant’s lifespan has been found.
- Most citizens of Los Angeles speak and/or understand Cityspeak, a dialect consisting of a combination of French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, and other languages.
- Due to the extreme environmental degradation that has taken place, there are no more living plants or animals in Los Angeles. Instead, all existing animals have been genetically engineered by animal designers such as Abdul Ben Hassan, and are called “animoids”. All animoids have a distinctive barcode which can be used to identify them.

### Suggested Avenues of Research

The most important source of information for the Blade Runner committee is the original film. All delegates are REQUIRED to watch the movie in order to gain a full understanding of the setting and events. The content of this committee is inspired by *Blade Runner: Final Cut* — of all of the Blade Runner versions, Final Cut is considered to be the most representative of director Ridley Scott’s original vision for the film. Delegates are NOT expected to watch *Blade Runner 2049*.

Since this is a fictional crisis committee, there will be few sources of important information outside of the movie itself. That being said, it would be beneficial to research the ethics of artificial intelligence in the real world. Additionally, it could be useful for the two media representatives to research the role of news media in times of crisis.

Keep in mind that your position paper should focus on your character’s past and present stance on the issue of Replicants, how your character will contribute to the committee, and some potential solutions to each of the three “key issues” outlined earlier in this background guide. If you have any questions about the content of this background guide, or need help getting started with your position paper, feel free to reach out to me at [asha.mior@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:asha.mior@mail.utoronto.ca)

### Questions to Consider

1. Is there a point when artificial intelligence advances too far?
2. What is meant by the phrase “Robot rights”? Is there such a thing as humane or inhumane treatment of artificial intelligence?
3. What can we do when artificial intelligence begins to pose a risk to human actors?
4. How can we hold tech companies accountable to their moral obligations?
5. How do we reduce tension between groups of citizens in a polarized political landscape?
6. How does news media affect the public response to a crisis?

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